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### VIA U.S. MAIL

September 11, 2006

Ms. Elizabeth P. Archer, Esq.  
State Inspector General  
Office of State Inspector General  
2 Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, S.W.  
1102 West Tower  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

RE: Investigation File No. 05-034

Dear Ms. Archer:

This is a follow up to my response of April 25, 2006 to General Sehorn regarding the above referenced Investigative File involving the misuse of GDOT employees, equipment and resources. In the report the Office of the Inspector General ("OIG") made the following recommendations:

#### **Allegation #1**

The GDOT determine whether the evidence in its internal investigation is sufficient to identify the individual(s) responsible for the failure to deposit the proceeds of the sale of salvage into a state account and take any disciplinary or administrative action deemed appropriate.

#### **Allegation #2**

The GDOT coordinate with the Attorney General's office to seek reimbursement from the private property owner for the costs of the driveway repairs and replacement performed at state expense along SR 292. GDOT records reflect the cost incurred to the Georgia taxpayers to be approximately eight thousand eighty-eight dollars (\$8,088).

#### **Allegation #3**

The Commissioner of the GDOT provide a written directive to District Engineers to set forth department policy for employee appreciation and public relations events.

Ms. Elizabeth P. Archer

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In response to Allegation #1, the Department completed its internal investigation and because of the time lapse between the incident which occurred on or about April 12, 2001 and the reporting of the incident in July of 2004 the investigators were unable to identify the individual(s) who may have been responsible for failure to deposit the proceeds of the sale of salvaged materials into a state account. Therefore, I consider the Department's response to this allegation finalize.

Allegation #2 directed the Department to coordinate with the Department of Law regarding reimbursement from the private property owner for the costs of driveway repairs and replacement. I met with the Department of Law to discuss this matter and have received a response, see enclosure. It appears that after reviewing the documents and the OIG report, the Attorney General's office concluded that there was "not a sufficient link between the driveway entrance work performed and any breach of the involved driveway permit to provide a basis for seeking reimbursement of the cost of the work performed from the driveway permit applicant". Therefore, I consider the response to this allegation finalize.

Allegation #3 directed me to provide a written directive to the District Engineers regarding a department policy for employee appreciation and public relations events. I have implemented a department-wide policy regarding employee appreciation and public relations which will be distributed through the appropriate channels within the Department, see enclosed Policy.

If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (404) 656-5206.

Sincerely,



Harold E. Linnenkohl  
Commissioner

Enclosure

cc: Sandra Burgess, Director of Legal Services  
Mike Johnson, Administrator, Office of Personnel

## *Employee Celebrations and Public Relations Events*

### *Commissioner's Policy*

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It is recognized that celebrations honoring employees, retirees, and members of the public are a valid means of expressing appreciation and add value to the organization. At the same time, GDOT must remain accountable to the public for the appropriate use of work time and the responsible use of GDOT facilities. In view of these considerations, the following provisions will apply to any special events held during work hours or on GDOT property.

#### **A. Recognition Events**

For the purpose of this policy, a "recognition event" refers to any event that honors a wide group of employees, or retirees that is held during ordinary business hours or on GDOT property.

Approval by Executive Management is required prior to any Office or District sponsoring any recognition event other than those associated with annual meetings, the GDOT holiday program, Public Employee Recognition Week, or other work-related activities (e.g., ribbon-cutting ceremonies, etc.)

Management approval is required by the appropriate Division Director, Office Head, or District Engineer prior to employees volunteering to assist with the planning and preparation of a recognition event as well as for attendance at recognition events. Such managers may delegate this approval authority to their subordinate managers.

Except when required as a normal part of an employee's job duties, attendance at and preparation for recognition events is strictly voluntary. Employees may, however, be required to attend meetings that incorporate an element of celebration (e.g., annual meetings, regular staff meetings, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, etc.)

Public funds may not be used for any expenses associated with a recognition event. No funds, supplies, refreshments, or similar items may be solicited or received from contractors, consultants or vendors to support such events. Solicitation of funds from GDOT employees for such events is permissible so long as contributions are voluntary.

## **B. Public Recognition Events**

For the purpose of this policy, a "public recognition event" refers to any event that honors a member of the general public for recognized contributions to the mission of the department that is held during ordinary business hours or on GDOT property

Approval by Executive Management is required prior to any Office or District sponsoring any public recognition event other than those associated with work-related activities (e.g., board meetings, regular Commissioner staff meetings, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, etc.)

Management approval is required by the appropriate Division Director, Office Head, or District Engineer prior to employees volunteering to assist with the planning and preparation of a public recognition event as well as for attendance at public recognition events. Such managers may delegate this approval authority to their subordinate managers.

Except when required as a normal part of an employee's job duties, attendance at and preparation for recognition events is strictly voluntary. Employees who volunteer are required to take appropriate leave. Employees may, however, be required to attend meetings that incorporate an element of celebration for which leave need not be taken.

## **C. Sponsored Events**

For the purpose of this policy, a "sponsored event" refers to any training, workshop or conference either as a department sponsored event or a third party sponsored event that is held during ordinary business hours for the purpose of encouraging interaction, communication and technical support for employees regarding transportation-related policies. Approval by Executive Management is required prior to any Office or District hosting any Sponsored event.

Management approval is required by the appropriate Division Director, Office Head, or District Engineer prior to employees volunteering to assist with the planning and preparation of a sponsored event as well as for attendance at sponsored event. Such managers may delegate this approval authority to their subordinate managers.

The policy regarding the reservation of hotel and conference centers for sponsored events is governed by TOPPS 7165-4.

## **D. Special Occasions**

For the purpose of this policy, a "special occasion" refers to any event that honors a single individual, including occasions such as marriage, retirement, birth of a child, etc. "Special occasion" also refers to any activity held by a particular work group in celebration of a recognized holiday (e.g., Thanksgiving luncheon.)

Management approval is required by the appropriate Division Director, Office Head, or District Engineer for any activity honoring a special occasion. Management shall designate the timeframes in which such activities are held to ensure that all work units are covered.

Any gifts or contributions in support of a special occasion should be of nominal value and entirely voluntary. Public funds may not be used for any expenses associated with a special occasion. No funds, supplies, refreshments, or similar items may be solicited or received from contractors, consultants or vendors to support such events.

#### **E. Attendance**

When required as part of an employee's regular job duties, employees may be required to attend and/or participate in certain events covered by this policy. When such attendance is not required, no employee shall be coerced, threatened, intimidated or retaliated against in any way for electing not to participate.

#### **REFERENCE:**

Code of Ethics for Government Service, O.C.G.A. 45-10-1

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#### ***Document History:***

- added to TOPPS: xx/xx/06



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